

finding himself in a position to do something about it, he solemnly vowed to destroy it. Like most other government officials cognizant of Utah affairs, Connor believed the people of the territory were "ignorant dupes" entirely under the control of an "ecclesiastical monarchy." "The most of them are foreigners," he wrote, "gathered from the lower classes of Europe—men and women who know nothing about the American Government or its institutions." He found the whole community "bitter and unrelenting in their hostility to the Government," an attitude fostered by the "so-termed sermons" delivered in their tabernacles, which, according to him, were "models of obscenity and treason." "It is part of their creed," he wrote his superiors, "that the Government and people of the United States are the enemies alike of God and his chosen people, the Latter day Saints." He firmly believed that church leaders "incited" Indians "to acts of hostility" in hopes of driving gentiles out of the territory. Like others, he felt that his massacre of several hundred Shoshonis in the 1863 Battle of Bear River (also known as the Bear River Massacre) was necessary to wean the Indians from the Mormons.

Upon learning that his superiors in the military (most notably the Commander in Chief, Abraham Lincoln) would not support his bringing the Mormons to heel "at the point of the bayonet," Connor's strategy took a more subtle two-pronged approach. First, Connor hoped to end Utah's isolation by creating circumstances that would bring large numbers of gentiles to the territory. "The secret" of the hierarchy's power, he wrote, "lies in this one word—isolation." By sending hundreds of soldiers on prospecting missions, he hoped gold and silver discoveries would bring thousands of gentiles flocking to the area. Supporting any plan that would attract gentile interest, Connor became an energetic booster of mining, commerce, and industry in Utah. The second prong of Connor's strategy, which in the long run proved even more effective than the first, was to commence a propaganda campaign to "educate" the rest of the nation and the world about what was going on in Utah, hoping that enough political pressure could be generated to topple the Mormon government.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Long, *Saints and the Union*, especially 259. For contemporary descriptions of Connor's policy see Patrick Edward Connor to Major J. W. Barnes, 6 April 1865, U.S. Department of War, *War of the Rebellion*, series 1, vol. 50, pt. 2: 1184–86; C.D. Waudell to General Connor, 20 June 1865, District of the Plains, Register of Letters received, Jan.–Sept. 1865, in vol. 781, District of Missouri, 525–26, RUSA, pt. 2, entry 3257; and P. Edw. Connor, Brig. Genl. to

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lines that are invariably taken as foundations for their stories are these—that the Mormon women are wretched and would fain get away, but are checked by the Danites; that the Mormons are ready to fight with the Federal troops with the hope of success; that robbery of the people by the apostles and elders is at the bottom of Mormonism—or, as the *Vedette* puts it, “on tithing and loaning hang all the law and the profits.”

Calling the *Vedette* anti-Mormon “trash,” Dilke postulated that “the constant teasing” and “wasp-like pertinacity of the *Vedette* has done some harm to liberty of thought throughout the world.” Dilke noted that the “mere fact of the existence of the *Vedette* refutes the stories of the acts of the Danites in these modern days.” Were the Mormon assassins as real and ubiquitous as the newspaper said they were, the newspaper would have been silenced long ago. Its very existence, “disposes of the first set of stories,” Dilke continued, “and the third is equally answered by a glance at its pages.” Sheet after sheet of gentile advertisements attempting to attract Mormon money in Dilke’s mind “testified” to freedom and prosperity enjoyed by rank and file Latter-day Saints.<sup>63</sup>

The *Vedette*’s stories, however, were taken as gospel in much of the United States, especially in Washington, D.C. The growing federal anti-Mormonism the *Vedette* contributed to inadvertently had serious negative repercussions for the Indians of Utah. One salient example was an unprecedented reduction of congressional appropriations to feed the territory’s Indians. Undoubtedly believing reports of Mormon instigation of violence on the Overland Trail, Congress reduced Utah’s Indian Office appropriation by 92 percent, replacing the usual \$60,000 annual appropriation with a meager \$5,000.<sup>64</sup> These problems were compounded by the fact that Mormons, as a result of their animus towards federal officials, refused to allow Indian Office field officers to buy beef and flour for the Indians on credit. When the superintendent and agents did have cash, they were often charged exorbitant prices. Hence, they found themselves unable to feed their desperately hungry Indian wards.<sup>65</sup>

Unfortunately, many Utah bands for years had been forced to depend upon supplies provided by the Indian Office to sustain them

<sup>63</sup> Dilke, *Greater Britain*, 1:157, 169–70, 172.

<sup>64</sup> Amos Reed, Clerk Utah Superintendency, to William P. Dole, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 20 December 1862, BIA, M234, 900.

<sup>65</sup> J. Duane Doty to William P. Dole, 22 April 1863, BIA, M234, 901; and Agent F.W. Hatch to William P. Dole, 15 January 1864, BIA, M234, 901.